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ESPORTS

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Esports Audience Demographics 2023

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Esports viewers are expected to grow to **577.2** million worldwide in the

next few years, a large increase from the 397.8 million in 2019.

In this article, we'll touch on esports audience demographics, why brands should advertise to these technophiles and how brands can do so successfully.

How Many Esports Fans Are There?

With more than 474 million fans globally, esports is a flourishing audience segment rivaling traditional sports and even renowned sporting events like the Super Bowl.

Super Bowl LI was watched by 111 million fans as the **League of Legends Worlds** (LoL) reached a record-breaking viewership of 360 million viewers.

As stated by a Twitch representative, "The appeal of esports and game **live streaming** is just like any other type of hobby, sport, or skill: people enjoy watching others who are good at what they do. That being said, for brands looking to advertise in the space, it's important to understand who you'd be connecting with and why they're worth paying attention to."

Audience Demographics

You probably think esports fans are predominantly male and you

wouldn't be wrong; however, esports demographics are shifting and perhaps not how you would imagine.

From a growing population of US esports enthusiasts who reside near tech hubs or military bases to a growing base of fans between the ages of 35-44—audiences within the esports market continue to evolve with each historical moment.

To date, there are inferences we can make from early market indicators and US buyer statistics.

Learn more about the [sports fan buyer persona](#).

Geographic Location

Google Source Trends indicate that the United States ranks 38th out of 63 regions regarding the volume of keyword searches for esports topics. Majority of interest is in Asian and Scandinavian countries.

However, the topic of esports has been gaining popularity in the United States. Let's take a look at one of the most popular championships: 2021 League of Legends World Championship.

We can see granular results from states and cities that are leading the trend in this search term.

In the past 12 months the majority of interest has come from:

Top 5 states:

- Hawaii
- Washington State
- California
- Utah

- Nevada

Top 5 Metros:

- San Diego, CA
- Honolulu, HI
- Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne, FL
- San Francisco - Oakland - San Jose, CA
- Seattle - Tacoma, WA

The LoL Championship was broadcast in 18 languages by 19 broadcasters across 34 different platforms. It's no surprise that search query results for esports and LoL spiked during this time.

What's most interesting is the geographic breakdown of viewership. All of the metro areas listed above have two things in common; they're home to large military installations and situated near the fast-growing tech hubs.

Interesting fact: It's estimated that **80% of the US Airforce** is between the ages of 18-34 and identify themselves as a gamer (playing at least 4 hours a week). All military branches now have a formal esports program endorsed by the Department of Defense.

Age

The average age of a **US esports viewer** is 29. In a 2021 survey of 2,200 respondents published by **Statista**, 17% of respondents aged 18-34 were avid fans of esports in the US. Followed by 15% of respondents aged 35 to 44.

Gender

Approximately 72% of esports fans identify as male, but the number of women flocking to the sport is steadily climbing year over year.

Data from **Statistica** shows that women accounted for 45% of gamers in the US in 2021, up from 41% of US gamers identifying as women during the previous year.

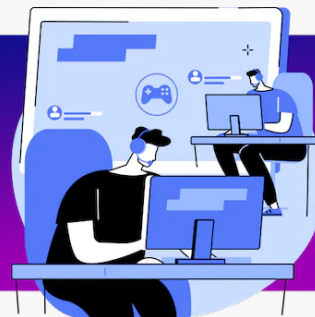
It would be foolish to discount women's growing participation in the gaming industry.

Income

Esports enthusiasts skew young but have substantial purchasing power. **Interpret's quarterly survey** of 9,000 consumers found that, "30% of esports fans have an annual income greater than \$100,000, and they are willing to spend on subscriptions they care about and regularly purchase electronics. Similarly, 25% of more casual esports viewers also reported incomes of more than \$100,000."

Interesting fact...

80% of the US Air Force identify themselves as gamers!



Why Brands should Advertise to Esports Fans

The esports market was valued at \$1.2 billion in 2021 and growing, perhaps at an even greater rate than predicted pre-pandemic, as populations adjust to remote work options and shifting lifestyles.

Given the annual income and age of this audience, brands have a significant opportunity to snag recurring revenue from a highly-engaged audience. This cash-rich audience also boasts large social followings on a global stage.

If your organization is looking to get in front of educated and eager spenders, esports is a pipeline worth tapping into.

Much like traditional sports, your brand can be front and center in a stadium, on a jersey, and endorsed by professional players.

Entertainment, sports, and technology collide

Esports is thriving, the sports' ability to connect fans with professional esports players in real-time whenever and wherever appeals to enthusiasts both young and old(er).

With **Twitch** leading the charge in terms of go-to live-streaming platforms, other alternatives like **YouTube Gaming** are diving into the fray touting better support to players and a focus on developing their fan communities.

For brands, this is a golden opportunity to advertise on such platforms and reach audiences that are actively engaged for extended periods of time, often averaging 100 minutes for each streaming viewership

Predominantly young and male – for now

Esports viewers may be young, but the average age is 29 with a growing base of older adults and women year over year.

Geographically, the areas in the US with the most viewership span coastlines, from California to Florida.

Global esports viewership is highest in the US, China, South Korea, Sweden and Denmark. Esports fans expand continents and as viewership increases, the fan base is projected to become more diverse.

Esports fans have money, good jobs and a willingness to spend

With esports fans having such a healthy income, many brands are wondering how they can get into the esports advertising game. And for good reason.

IAB found that approximately "43% of esports enthusiasts have an annual household income of \$75,000 with just under one-third (31%) reporting an income of \$90,000 or higher."

Esports fans continue to break attendance numbers at live events and

the amount of money spent on special passes and unique merchandise is nothing to spit at—in many cases selling out in a matter of minutes.

Fans continue to 'put their money where their mouth is' frequently donating to their favorite streamers through Twitch.

This monetary act says something, considering esports entertainment can be accessed for free. When the stream is over, players can pocket a few bengies or several thousand dollars from donations and tips alone.

Booming industry with massive potential

Highlights:

- Many American male millennials find esports just as popular as compared to more traditional sports like baseball or hockey.
- 76% of esports enthusiasts are choosing to reduce time spent watching traditional sporting events and opting for esports instead.
- There is a pocket of about six million US esports fans that do not watch baseball, hockey, basketball or football.

Esports fans want to be thoughtfully engaged by brands

According to the **Esports Playbook**, "58% of esports fans in the US have

positive attitudes towards brand involvement in esports.”

This presents an opportunity for brands to get in front of an enthusiastic audience, made up of people from different backgrounds, ages, genders, and geographic locations. Esports fans are passionate about the sport and are willing to spend on brands that can build an authentic connection with them.

What Motivates Esports Fans?

It's important for brands looking to invest in the esports market to identify their esports audience (there are several) and understand the dedicated online communities for each game and their motivations.

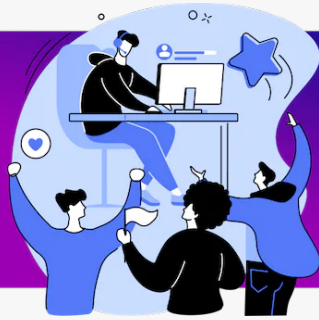
Common motivations for esports fans:

- Relationship building
- Game upskilling
- Entertainment/live spectatorship

It's equally important to understand fan gaming tastes which typically fall into these categories:

- Player vs. Player (PvP)
- First-Person Shooter (FPS)
- Real-Time Strategy (RTS)
- Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA)
- Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG)

Esports fans also use different social media platforms for varying purposes. For current esports news fans turn to Twitter. If they're looking for an esports meme, Instagram. Post-match analysis, Reddit.



Motivated by...
game upskilling, live spectatorship
and relationship building :)

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